773 the slow evolution of consciousness (concept of pain), judgment (concept of responsibility and guilt), will (concept of the creative effort and work), all of which develop in man with the advent of suffering
• [761] and death. Death is felt to be an accident in the working out of the universal order, an accident compensated for in part by the conservation of spiritual principles and their reincarnation in accordance with the fundamental belief in the eternal resurrection of all things. The myth describes the first ritual, the rejuvenation, which ceases with the advent of death but is replaced by blood sacrifice which today is still the central practice of the rites (1).

1. Wherever possible the writer has avoided discussion of the details of myths so as not to distract the reader from the general line of the Bambara world view. But the scholar, in attempting to better understand the collective psychological processes of this people, may profitably study the numerous variant themes found among them.

The myths described below are the framework of the present-day Bambara religion and of the general cults to Pemba and Faro maintained by the people.

Preliminaries of Creation

1. The glã̃ glã̃ zo

772 The Bambara creation myths imply a philosophy of being and of the universe developed from the void, from nothing, fu (2).

[802] 2. This concept is expressed by a sign with the same name which can also be translated by "nothingness" or "zero" and is a part of the Bambara number system. See Fig. 1, No. 11. For a discussion of this sign denoting the continuity and proliferation of creation, see p. 102.

778 understandable that the strength of the large pembele should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god pembele will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the nyama contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its nyama, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain...women would bear no children, no longer having any nyama. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

1. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 200.

The Balanza

824 The tree balanza, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade dies, the tree having taken his dya. In others, women still make it [782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness, agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others, [843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with balanza. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions kokuruni (literally, little humped back), the balanza of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

Spiritual Principles (1)

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1. A few comments on the spiritual principles of the Bambara (in particular on the dya and the nyama) have been collected in the chapter entitled "Théorie des âmes" by Tauxier, La Religion bambara (pp. 14-25), in which the author appraises the works of the Abbé Henry and of Ch. Monteil. Some of the observations made in the following chapter have been summarized by the author in "La Personne chez les Bambara" and in "Note sur le tere chez les Bambara /Note on the Tere among the Bambara/." It will be useful to compare this study of spiritual principles with the studies made among the Dogon and presented respectively by M. Griaule, S. de Ganay, and the author in Masques Dogon, Les Devises des Dogon, and Les Âmes des Dogon.

761 776 The Soul, ni, and the Double, dya:

[826] Faro controls the principle of life in water, which is his realm as well as the life-giving element par excellence. In the bodies of living beings, this principle has its seat in the blood. The blood of the sacrifices offered to the spirit (or failing that, the juice of the tomato, a transformation of blood) is a contribution to the reservoir of life controlled by Faro—life which he redistributes in all its forms throughout the universe. Water is the privileged element in which life may persevere indefinitely. Elsewhere, life is maintained only if water comes to nourish it.

761 776 842 833 Faro's creative function is materialized by each marital partner eating a tomato before sexual relations. This act is accompanied by the recital of a prayer. The juice of the fruit, which contains the body of the future child, transmits life according to the following mechanism:

761 776 842 824 Faro receives the offerings of tomatoes grown ritually in the consecrated fields, as well as the blood of victims slain in his name above the waters. Blood and juice, spreading over water, the fertilizing agent, are collected by the swallow, Faro's airborne messenger. Liberated in space, they return to the soil with fertilizing rain and penetrate the tomato seeds which thus contain a particle of generative power.

761 776 842 After the marital couple has absorbed the fruit, a smooth-bodied embryo with nonarticulated limbs is formed in the maternal womb. /58/ It is at this moment that the couple consummate the sexual act in the course of which the woman "takes into herself the entire body of her husband": the upper part through the eyes, the lower part through the genital organs. The masculine seed located in the seven principal articulations (knees, elbows, ankles, and spine) transmits them to the embryo. The body, originally similar to the body of the spirit, thus becomes that of a human being.

The spirit restows the spiritual forces after the man has mated for the second time with his wife. If the woman bears a single child it means that the man, in the course of the second union, formed the double of the first germ, but was not permitted to procreate twins.

761 776 843 774 Faro disposes of the child's life and nature. He decides all that the child will be and will do, and determines his destiny from the moment the seed is placed by him in the womb. The foetus then develops with no further modifications until parturition, at which time it receives the spiritual principles, the soul, ni, and the double, dya, which will be his throughout his life. It is at this time that the inner relations of the individual to the social group to which he belongs intervene. Although Faro gives each child a new body, he animates this body with spiritual forces drawn from the family reservoir. The [775] newborn child is the direct heir to the ni and the dya of a deceased member of the family, actually of the one, whatever one's sex, who died shortly before the birth of the child (1).

1. The reincarnation of the deceased's spiritual principles, however, is not an absolute rule. Faro is the master of an infinite reserve of souls. Twins, albinos, and certain other children are born with the ni and dya as yet undetermined. They originate respectively in the second sky (kaba dye) and in water (dyi sumale). Further study on this particular point is necessary to complete this investigation.

761 776 774 775 The consequence of death was, in effect, to separate the corpse from the forces that animated it. The ni, by appropriate ritual, had been preserved on the altar of the ancestors (2), and the dya had left

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2. Grouped hierarchally, children, male adults, and women form religious societies or institutions, dyo. Each dyo is charged with the upkeep of altars which serve to preserve the spiritual forces of the group. (See p.

the dying man to go into the water and place itself under Faro's protection. At the moment of delivery, both ni and dya return to the body of the newborn child who replaces the dead man, but they return in reversed order: the dya is returned to the body of the child and becomes his ni; the ni of the deceased mixes with the birth water spread on the ground which forms the shadow (suma) and will be his double, the twin (1). In the case of a boy, the dya will be female; in the

[844
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1. The blood of childbirth represents the excess tomato juice absorbed by the woman, that which remains in the womb after the formation of the embryo. On the eighth day after birth, the mother of the parturient woman squeezes three or four tomatoes (depending on the sex of the newborn) into a gourd which she then gives to the child's father. The latter makes his wife drink the juice to replace the blood which she has lost and which is considered impure.

case /59/ of a girl, it will be male. These movements are independent of the sex of the deceased as the spirit reverses the sexes when necessary. Each human being is thus both male and female through his soul and his double. [828] This conception of human nature, which is fundamental to the Bambara, is expressed in the symbolism of numbers. [801] The number seven is formed of three (male sexual symbol) and four (female sexual symbol) and represents the complete man. In addition, on another level, the number six is that of male twins, seven that of mixed twins (and the hermaphrodite), and eight that of female twins. The body of the newborn child is gently tapped by the number of strokes representing the above figures in order to call the child's ni according to its sex. [844]

pale. It is manifested by a loss of strength and by illnesses affecting the body openings: the man becomes blind and deaf-mute. He may also become paralyzed. Generally he does not die but is pursued by ills until he purifies himself.

In addition, the tere changes when it is detached from its normal support; it then becomes nyama, a force which acts outside the body. Manifest in action, the fact can already be sensed in the spoken word, the bearer of nyama which immediately affects /63/ the person to whom it is addressed. The consequences of this action of the word are manifold.

At the time of death, the tere is completely liberated. Transformed into nyama which leaves the body, it then becomes a very active form which, in certain cases, can attack whomever it considers responsible for the death (1).

1. This very visible but incomplete aspect of the nyama is the one that has been most studied heretofore. On this subject, see the works of the Abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Furthermore, in the sky, in space, and on earth, there is a nyama independent of the tere. The nature of this general and vital element has not been completely clarified by investigation.

Sacrificial beings, men or animals, or plants for ritual use never release a dangerous nyama. Their spiritual principles and forces are channeled in the course of the ritual and directed toward the benefit of a supernatural power through the altar. The same is true of domestic animals immolated for consumption, in which case their forces are used over again and their death causes no disorder since it was foreseen by Faro's law concerning food.

On the other hand, the nyama of the bush animals (nyama baka) leave their dead bodies and pursue the hunter (2). To protect himself

2. The sick man may be treated in the following manner: seven (or a multiple of seven) cowrie shells are thrown upon the hide of the animal

8/2 561 man's life passes through seven successive ages corresponding to the seven skies, the seven earths, the seven waters, and the seven stages of millet growth. The seven ages are: bilakoro, "an uncircumcised person"; kemẽkoro "a circumcised person of the last age grade"; tyebaɛ̃, literally, a big man; maseɛ̃, literally, a successful person; makoroba, literally, an elderly person; madeseleɛ̃, literally, a person who cannot succeed, an old man; mabaɛ̃, an impotent old man.

8/2 561 796 These bonds are also confirmed annually for everybody in the course of the ritual called "the renewal of the year." By renewing the cardinal points, the Bambara add to the strength of these poles of attraction which are responsible for maintaining things within themselves and with respect to each other. At the same time they proceed to a "revival of the body and soul," including all from the youngest to the oldest. For the year to come, they take a fresh breath, a new life, and submit the body to internal and external purifications, making it adequate to fulfill its role.

Effects of Death on the Person

761 The first effect of death is to dissociate the elements that make up the person. The religious practices, imbued with respect for these elements, aim at organizing their preservation in order that they may not be lost to the deceased, to society, and finally, to Faro who controls life and assures the survival of souls.

The dya remains in the water where it will be kept until the birth of a child. But the ni, which escapes from the body with the last breath, is watched for by the head of the family who catches it and carries it to an altar. As we have seen above, it will return to animate the dya of the child who will inherit the deceased's spiritual principles, leaving behind it on the altar, a kind of exuvia, mana or folo, as a sign of the deceased's sojourn on earth.

The tere becomes transformed at death; liberated from the body, it becomes nyama which escapes and which may sometimes attack the living. Proof of this is the fear aroused by the sight of a corpse. /73/ It would seem that the tere's combination of strength and character is expressed by the activity of the nyama; but it is really dangerous only in the case of violent death (the murder of a man or an animal). In this case the nyama attacks the responsible party. If death is natural, the nyama, like the ni, is directed by the relatives and placed on the family altar (pembele) in the course of the

761 funeral rites. There it joins the ancestral forces, the aggregate of which forms a whole whose power is used by the descendants during the seasonal rituals for beneficial purposes.

764 The body is buried; it "belongs to the termites" and in the end only
761 the bones will remain and be honored as a testimony of the physical life. Sometimes they are removed from the tomb, examined, and prayed to before being replaced.

761 When a birth occurs in the family the newborn child, having in-
844 herited the ni and the dya of the deceased, receives his nyama preserved in the pembele and his given name, toko; thus one being replaces another, using the same forces which are used over again and again. Life transmits itself intact. Not only is it undiminished by death, but the dya's sojourn in Faro's residence is thought to be a "reviving," a desirable and beneficial purification. Similarly, the passing of the ni onto the family altars brings about a rejuvenation.

761 On the altars and in the tombs, the "exuviae and bones counted and classified by Faro," are a valid testimony for eternity and serve to maintain the integrity of the whole world of living and dead until the final resurrection.

Attributes of the Person

The Name

551 The organization of the total family /famille indivise/ of the Bambara has already been the object of descriptive works (1). It is however, appropriate to mention it since certain elements such as family names, devices, taboos, and kinship relationships described as "joking" are related to the components of the person.

1. In particular Ch. Monteil, Les Empires du Mali; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue /The Malinke and their Language/.

Socially, the person is first placed by his given name, toko, that of the ancestor who gave him his ni and his dya, or any other in the paternal or maternal line. The given name indicates the relation to a family group as well as /74/ the person's individuality. It is accompanied by the father's family name (dyamu), whose origin and

304 During the seclusion, they wear about their head a piece of white
[292 cloth, Faro's color, which has the same function as the cap of the
534] circumcised boy. They shake a gourd bolokode barani, filled with eight grains or small pebbles, whose sound keeps passers-by away. The leaps, which they perform over the fire made of clothes, gourds, and refuse that have been ignited, end the seclusion and rid them of their wanzo, which goes to settle in the altars of the ndomo.

It is said of a young girl who was well excised that she is well behaved and carries herself with dignity. On the contrary, it is said of a girl of light morals "that her hands were not washed clean" (1).

1. A bolo ma ko ka dye ya.

which means that she was improperly excised.

Funerals

761 The effect of death is to dissociate the elements composing the
764 person. The body becomes a corpse (su) from which the /189/ ni and
775 the dya escape to follow their particular destinies, while the tere is transformed into nyama, an active and dangerous force which wanders about the deceased. The funeral rites aim first to channel the deceased's spiritual elements which must be conserved in the interest of the deceased as well as that of the community. Moreover, through the care given to the body and to these elements, the memory of the dead person is piously kept up. The notion of a final resurrection, promised to all who have lived, inspires these preparations. The bones of the deceased, which are like the exuvia of his physical body, its solid and durable framework, join the exuvia of his soul which is kept in the altars of the Komo. Thus, at the end of time, the dead man "will rise and, to everyone's joy, join his family."

764 The funeral rites, which the Bambara have always celebrated, have evolved along with their beliefs. At the time when the cult of the balanza was flourishing, the dead bodies were hung from trees until they rotted, their bones picked up and kept by their descendants.
[532] The ancestors of the Gwonna then carved pieces of sunzun wood called mani (literally, little person) in the image of the dead. The length of the wood was proportionate to the length of the body; the head, arms, legs, and genitals were carefully reproduced. The mani

766 In fact, if he dies far away his breath cannot be captured nor can the
167 successive transfers be made. For this reason the family head disclaims all responsibility in such a case by warning those who are about to leave for along time of the impossibility of fulfilling his duties toward them.

Nevertheless, a ritual has been instituted for the young men obliged
766 to leave the family groups because of military service. The case is submitted to the chief of the Komo and the party concerned has two goats sacrificed over the altars. While the blood runs, the chief asks the Komo to watch over the soul and to be willing to reclaim it as it would if the person died among his family.

If the news of the death of an absent person spreads, the family
[187] questions the Komo through divining procedures to find out if the soul has returned and if, by this fact, order has been reestablished.

Death by Lightning and Drowning

• 761 Death which occurs in certain ways considered abnormal and a
766 proof of Faro's wrath does not permit the reincarnation of the spiritual principles. This is true of men killed by the Komo for sorcery, and of people struck by lightning for having broken a taboo of Faro's. Their /201/ soul and their double are lost forever to their descendants, and their bodies thrown into the common grave.

Drowning is either accidental or due to Faro's wrath, in which case the corpse is returned with the nose and navel cut. In both instances, the double preserved in the water is not lost, but sacrifices are necessary for the return of the soul and of the double to a child in the family.

If the body has not risen to the surface, the father of the drowned person has the right to mourn him only when all the rituals have been performed. He asks the chief of the Komo to intercede with Faro to obtain his permission to search for the body in the water. He offers seven tomatoes which the chief throws into the water in exchange for the corpse in the presence of seven elders of his age grade. Some Bozo mobilized for this purpose dive in to bring back the body. The chief cuts the nose and the navel which he throws into the water as an offering. Then the corpse is placed flat on its stomach and pressed
[82] vigorously to extract the water, for to bury it full of water is equivalent to "burying rain" and dooming the countryside to drought.

774 it is a fluid emanated from the body itself and made manifest as much by the shadow, which may be seen in sunlight or in a bright light, as by the image which appears when the body is placed in front of a reflecting surface. This fluid is called dya.

774 787 The dya has the faculty of leaving the body when it is asleep to wander wherever it wishes; the sight of its wanderings, which the body can witness, constitutes a dream (sugo). Dream is a kind of reality; it is in a sense the private life of the dya in company with its fellow-dya. During waking hours, the dya accompanies the actions of the body; during sleep, the body must endure the dya's peregrinations, for there is no doubt but that the dya rules the body it inhabits. Thus, waking a person abruptly is virtually a criminal act because, if the dya is away at the time, a too abrupt summons may break the link between [76] the dya and the body, and such a rupture (sa) is death (sa). Besides, the body has only a vague memory of the wanderings of its dya, it experiences the consequences of this action. On awaking, the body is exhausted by all these mad rushing about and fantastic escapades, and it feels the effects of the dya's actions, either good or bad.

In short, this dya is comparable to what some Europeans call a "double."

775 Further, it appears that the dya plays a crucial role in the "return" (sagi) to life, that is, rebirth, which is one of the most strongly held beliefs of the Bambara. After death, the dya is reincarnated in the same families; the Bambara even claim to have positive proof of this fact. Such and such a newborn child has such and such anatomical peculiarity of the deceased -- is this not a proof that the deceased wanted to show thereby that he was re-embodied? If a child dies very young, the body is mutilated in some agreed manner -- a finger is broken, for instance -- [121] and if later a child is born in the family with a similar deformity, everyone is convinced that the dead child has "returned": a sagira, "he has returned."

It is also believed possible for a dead person to be reincarnated far from his own people. All over Bambara country stories are retold of dead people who, more or less long after

771 In any case, these are questions which he does not ask or which, at least, he has not considered in any way that would cause him to make logical, even if fragmentary, syntheses. His words and his acts are indications and sometimes even guide-posts for us, but how uncertain and misleading they can be! And, in the observation of current facts, how many at least seeming contradictions there are! However, in the main, the analysis given in the paragraphs above represents the basis of Bambara dogma, since everything happens in reality as if the Bambara were living in accordance with these principles.

761 That being the case, life results from the union of the two parts of the body, while death is a result of their separation.
772 Whence come these two elements and who it is that decides upon their union? No answer is possible. The Bambara say, merely, that certain persons are reincarnations. Precautions
[844] taken during pregnancy and delivery show that childbirth is one of those mysteries against which taboos must be observed as a protection. The frequent and readily believed stories about
[845] women giving birth to monsters -- usually animals -- bear witness to the affinities which, in the minds of the Bambara, exist between all creatures. But nothing specific is said about what precedes and determines the birth of a child.

562 This is a secret to which the Bambara are, of course,
778 not indifferent. It is evidenced in the fact that women, through whom man comes into the world, are held to be doubtful creatures, at the very least, partly because of menstruation, which makes a woman impure, and partly because of the mysterious travail she endures during the delivery of a child (1).

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1. Women are also susceptible of being possessed continuously by a spirit (see the story of the Déni-bo Ba, p. 123). That is why, when a woman is several times widowed, she is suspected of being possessed by a jealous spirit who kills off her husbands. She is often even thought to be herself a sorceress.

614 794 776 beginning with his relatives, to avenge his hatred toward them for selling him into slavery. It seems likely that the establishment of these ferocious deities may well date from the time of this despot and perhaps was due to his personal initiative.

The "people of Ségou" also held in high esteem the deities of the people they conquered. Indeed, there is no doubt that they constituted the most precious part of the booty of war. The Toucouleur [Tukolor] relate that when they entered Ségou-Sikoro they found an idol in chains; it was the protective deity of a group of the Nono-n-kobe people of the cliff of Bandiagara. With the evident intention of keeping this conquered people forever enslaved, the Bambara had captured their god and were having its cult observed by its own priest, kept captive likewise for the purpose (2). [320]

2. See Desplagnes, Le plateau central nigérien [The Nigerian Central Plateau], p. 175.

The chronicle shows that the Komo also figured in the Ségou pantheon, and if one refers to what we have said about this brotherhood, he will understand the important role it played in the to-da since the fama himself acted as Komo-tigi.

614 794 761 266 There is absolutely no doubt that cannibalism was in favor on certain definite occasions and, according to appropriate ritual, especially, at the time of the election of a fama. It is obvious, in any case, that under the despotic rule of the clan human life had little value. The atrocities of Dékoro, the passiveness of his victims, the help given him in the execution of his worst crimes by the very people who were directly threatened -- these are not isolated cases. They are indicative of the basic Sudanese temperament in general, which, if not innate, at least is affected by a very ancient atavism. It is because this kind of arbitrary command over the lives of individuals has been practiced for so many centuries that the Bambara often remain impassive in the face of death. They consider its unforeseen occurrence, even when sudden and the result of man's

614 794 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause no surprise.

761 The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

794 614 769 To complete the description of the somewhat mystical features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his natural descendants because he had been their fa; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been fama; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the ton'-dyon' when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the ton'-dyon' to succeed to the office of fama was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties [782] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to ba Kongo-ba when a new fama was elected: a man and an ox.

614 794 Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor, can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, munu; the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basket-work headdress, yugu, which has eight whorls and which formerly was reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the bolokuruni, one-armed blacksmith of a black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the
[824] fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him: the Yayalẽ, the Ngoyõ (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus, small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the masters of the water.

776 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the
784 black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and
841 butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the
761 totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is represented by the ni (soul) and the dya (double). Pemba is represented by the téré (the character, force, and conscience) and the nyama (which is the téré when it leaves its corporeal support after
[826] death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the Wanzo (evil force with

[826] 774 761 its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy [304] is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it [831] is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles. 775 761 Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person. The dya remains in the water where it will become the ni of the new-born in the family of the deceased; the ni is caught by the family head and transported to the altar where it will animate the dya of the new-born; the téré becomes nyama, a dangerous and vengeful force; it is deposited on the pembele, where it rejoins the ancestral forces. The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

782 To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family, owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity [531] emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

that she may speak to him freely. When the day of union comes, the wife herself prepares her husband's food; then she lies on the left side (the feminine side) and her husband on the right side, and she cannot be impregnated except by a union twice repeated.

These corporal techniques are dictated and ordered by the religious imperatives which pervade the life of the Bambara from before his birth until after his death.

What we have said of the Bambara's religion and of his conception of the world enables us to understand that there cannot be for him a complete break between life and death: birth is a reincarnation; death is not destruction. This is why a man's life does not present one substantial unity but is divided into a certain number of distinct periods, each of which is inaugurated by a rite of transition that marks the death of an anterior state and the rebirth to a new life.

a. Before Birth

From the first month after his conception, the infant constitutes a person who receives a series of spiritual forces emanating from his father's side of the family and especially from the recently deceased ancestor whose name he will receive. At the same time, he inherits all of the paternal taboos, which the mother must respect during her pregnancy. It is only after his birth, at the time he receives his name, that the infant receives the spiritual forces coming from his mother's side. These forces are transmitted through the medium of the priest and the ancestors of the priest.

From then on, the infant is required to observe all the taboos of the beings who have had a part in the composition of his personality; he thus finds himself tightly bound to the society in which he will live.

b. Birth Rites

At birth the baby is washed with millet beer (1) (to purify him)

1. For all these rites, see G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

[i.e., sexual reproduction and childrearing, see pp. 117-119. -Analyst]

584 She returns to her own family every year at the beginning of the rainy season and goes back to her future in-laws at the start of the dry season.

583 Every year she takes home 30 kola nuts and three cocks, and
584 the young man's fa begins to pay the bride price which traditionally came to eight oxen and five sheep. The girl returns at the dry season bringing fonio, fruits of the karite, and sumbalé (for making sauces), and other products.

583 She is married after the appearance of the first menses, and
585 her husband continues to pay the bride price in the following order: a cow, a bull, a heifer ...

583 Throughout the engagement period, the young man must
584 cultivate the field of his future parents-in-law.

583 Among the Bambara who currently practice the exchange of young girls between two families for marriage purposes, the compensation is no longer paid, although gifts and contributions are still given.

584 On the day of the marriage the girl is accompanied by an
585 attendant who represents her twin, while the young man also is aided by an attendant, and the two couples symbolize the union of the two couples of [94] primordial twins. Finally, the young girl is carried up to the abode constructed for her by her husband. She is followed by a cortege of seven women, each carrying part of the bride's gifts. The investigation being carried out by Mme. Dieterlen in the Bambara country indicates that the seven women represent the seven
[826] seeds that each man possesses in his clavicles; the bride is the fonio seed that is brought to the husband's village, for marriage is considered to be a cultivation.

The marriage of twins requires slightly different rites. When the twins are not of the same sex, the boy must deflower the girl before she marries (there is only one intercourse). If the twins are two boys, the first to marry must let his wife have relations with his twin. If the twins are girls, the husband of the first to be married must also unite with the second.

f. Death and Funerals

761 Death dissociates the different elements which make up the
764 person. The purpose of the funeral rites is to gather the spiritual

761 principles of the cadaver on altars or masks in order to preserve them
764 for the community.

The rites have undergone an evolution. Formerly the bodies
764 were hung from trees until they rotted, while the bones were kept. At present the bodies are buried. Only a band of cotton symbolizing the tongue of the deceased, that is, his word, is attached to the
[764] branch of a tree. If the deceased was an initiate of the Komo, the society plays an important role in the funeral rites.

All these rites have been studied by G. Dieterlen and Tauxier.
766 Monteil has described at great length the funeral ceremonies of a chief: the three rifle shots recalling his combats, the lamentations of the women, the notification of the village notables, the offerings of relatives and friends, the alms at the crossroads, and finally, the inhumation. The body is prepared, the head shaved, the interior cleaned with water and salt. A paste of water and ground cowry is put into the body openings (the ground cowries possess a divine spirit assuring the preservation of the cadaver). The body, and particularly the head, is daubed with this same paste, then the body is laid on its right side, feet to the north (a woman would be laid on her left side). Finally, the funeral celebration takes place, with the ritual feast
765 and the purifications. Seven days later the celebration of commemoration (Sangha) takes place, followed by the mourning of the women for forty days. After this time the deceased is transformed into a living ancestor.

763 The Bambara receive omens of their death or of a chief's death from certain signs given them in the bush, such as coming across a chameleon on a red anthill, the cry of a certain mythical hyena, the passing of certain crying monkeys or certain birds.

Certain gifted beings have the ability to perceive the departure of a person's spiritual forces and his imminent death. Sometimes they are able to bring back these forces and reinstate them in the body to save the man in danger.

[95] g. Ancestor Worship

769 After his death a man is transformed into a living ancestor
775 and is the object of a cult. The cult is closely connected to the agricultural cults; the ancestors are efficient vital forces which

755 cannot cure. In order to become fertile, a sterile woman knots one[1]
[842] around her wrist or biceps, and a strange tafo it is, taken from the skin of a monkey's hand.

Syphilitic children, covered with pimples and pustules of magnan -- the name with which they adorn this disease -- have chicken droppings for their crême Simon, and this is the ointment of ointments.

[843] Chalk is the specific for pregnant women; to ease the mild discomforts which generally precede maternity, they draw pretty white crosses on the abdomen or on the chest, between the breasts.

2. Death

761 195 If sickness is not natural, there is all the more reason why death should not be. In the eyes of the Bambara there is no evil comparable to it. They fear it and its very name makes them tremble. When it is necessary for someone to announce a death or refer to it, he quite often uses a circumlocution in the presence of a member of the family. At the death of a child it is in good taste to say: "A sagira a ko, he has gone backwards," and if the deceased was a grown woman: "She is no more, she has ended her career, she has been buried." The politest of all the expressions concerning married men who have passed from life to death is: "A so yélémana, he has changed his dwelling." The initiates of certain sects cannot bear to be spoken to about death, and the korodouga, of the kouéré or koté sects, for example, get up and leave in displeasure, no matter how little this subject is dwelt upon in their presence.

761 The Bambara are not unaware that Moslems, missionaries, and all Europeans make light of their fetishes and scorn them; therefore in the presence of any of these they direct to God the accusation that He has caused the death of one of their people. This procedure is only a courtesy, an indirect way of respecting the belief of those to whom they speak, whose life they share, and whom they fear. They know that God has the power of life and death over human beings, but they attribute death to Him so seldom, that during seven consecutive years spent in the Sudan I did not encounter a single instance.

/48/ Death is always caused by a wicked person, by an enemy who

[1] [i.e. A tafo, a string with seven or nine knots. --Analyst]

761 is taking vengeance, or by a djiné fetish also known as gnéna, by a boli fetish also called gnâ, by a souba or initiate of the Siri fetish who does evil for pleasure, or finally by a gnâma, a force about which I have already said so much. Although they may assert that one can die of old age, their whole pattern of behavior and expression clearly shows that for them old age alone cannot cut the thread of a man's days; it is a grateful genie, the fetish of his favorite sect, and his family fetishes, if he has any, that come and take away his soul.

When a child has died expressions such as the following flow from all lips: "A fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma." -- "Souba do, it is a souba." -- "Kono gnâma do, it is the gnâma of a bird." -- "Djiné ou ta no do, it is the way the djiné genii behave." -- Since the djiné readily find homes in and on trees, the Bambara also have this easily understood metaphor: "A yélé la djiri djougou kan, he has climbed an evil tree," that is to say, he has displeased a spirit of the bush, either because he has climbed the tree which it uses as a dwelling or because he has broken its branches or picked its fruit. At the death of a young man, a young girl, or any adult, all the people of the village are plunged in sorrow, and one hears them repeating to each other: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba behave"; "ou yé korti sou a la, the poison of a fetish, the korti has been thrown at him," korti is the name of the poison; "doukono dir'a ma, poison has been poured for him"; "boli no do, that is how the boli fetishes behave," "Komo y'a fa, Kono (1) y'a fa, Nia y'a fa, Douga y a fa, etc.;

1. Note that Komo and Kono are two different fetishes.

it is Komo that has killed him, it is Kono, Nia, Nama, or Douga, etc., that has killed him." -- At the death of an old man who owned either djiné or boli fetishes, they say: "A gnénaou -- or -- a gnâou séra a ma, his djiné genii or boli fetishes have gone to him; they have come to take him." If he did not have a fetish, his death is ostensibly attributed to old age, but one is given to understand that he was very specially devoted to such-and-such a fetish, which therefore is not unconnected with his death. I know the /49/ Bambara say to Europeans,

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé, Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

761 782 776 When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla séra à ma, he was old and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice, as we shall see later.

761 778 The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono, Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 578 674 754 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative, they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to which they have offered their services; almost always there is either a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family. This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

761 518 674 754 therefore secretly, and good relations between the actual /50/ or supposed culprit and the unfortunate family are not broken in anyway. The strange fact that has always surprised me is that all these people converse amicably, do each other small favors, invite each other to drink and eat, while in their hatred they maintain a constant guard. They watch each other as they smile -- one party to protect their lives and their interests, the other to obtain vengeance. And on the day when it is least expected, that vengeance explodes inexorably. Cases of poisoning are not unusual in the Sudan, and it is not without reason that almost every death is blamed on the korti and the dounkono. I know that many die a perfectly natural death, and I have seen dropsy brought on by syphilitic consumption stupidly attributed to poisoning by the Komo, acute peritonitis to poisoning by the Kono, dysentery to poisoning by the Nama, undue swelling of the testicles with purulent abscesses, which were consequences of misconduct, to poisoning by the Nia, an abscess in the bladder to the Douga or the Nama. But it is a definite fact which I have noted many times in the course of seven years, and which any European living among the Negores can observe, however little he knows the language, the diseases which kills the natives is contracted when they return from a market, from a festival in honor of a fetish, or from a drinking bout where d'lo flows freely. The person's kidneys are hard and painful; his stomach causes him horrible suffering, his intestines seem to be torn by thorns, and there is complete anuria. In three or four days at the most his time is up.

The administrators at the head of a circle have all had to settle these cases which touch on the question of poisoning, and I doubt if there is one who has seen the matter clearly, so difficult it is to establish poisoning by korti and by dounkono. Let us refrain from throwing a stone at them; in a similar situation we would all be at a loss, for here there are always as many guilty persons as there are innocent, and all of them deserve the rope even while able openly to claim peace, liberty, and life. Since in the eyes of the Negro the fetish alone is guilty, there is a very simple means of stopping the decimation of the population and of allowing it to grow!

754 become detached and fall of their own accord "if they are well made
674 and have lost none of their complete power"; he also has a mass of antidotes. Almost always he escapes with nothing more than a few days on his mat and a good stomach-ache, and although his convalescence may be long and can sometimes go on indefintely, at least he is shown sympathy; he gets a big share in the sacrifices offered by his friends, and his broth improves.

754 If the korti are many and cannot be numbered -- "each fetish
278 has its own" -- the dounkono are still more numerous, for in addition to the fetishes, the sorcerers, elders, men, and women, all know how to prepare a poison and give it whatever strength and power is desired. Every poison produces a special disorder in the body depending on the hand that throws or pours it. When in doubt, the Bambara consult the being who never deceives and cannot be mistaken: the sorcerer! And it is usually he who prescribes the antidote.

754 In the eyes of the Bambara, pouring poison (dounkono di) or
673 throwing it (korti sou) is a blameworthy act, and those who are guilty of it have a dismal reputation among their fellows. One should not be surprised to see this crime remain unpunished, however, for in their eyes it does not bear the same odium as an overt or concealed murder by main force. I might even say, without fear of error, that this way of taking revenge is for them not a crime in the strict sense of the word. They so often have recourse to fetishes to settle a dispute and so readily threaten an enemy with the wrath of the gods, that taking vengeance through their intermediary leaves them calm and without any remorse. Besides, with what reproach should we reproach one who does so? It is true that he is cruel and without pity, /56/ but who gives power to the powder that he pours and the powder that he throws? It is the god, the fetish, and it alone is guilty! So let the enemy obtain the fetish's good graces and ward off its blows by sacrificing, let him set a more powerful god against it.

761 As one can see to the Bambara there is nothing natural about
753 physical and mental suffering and death; there is always an intermediary, and suffering and death are caused by an enemy who is taking vengeance, by a wicked person, by a sorcerer, or by a fetish.

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first by the accuser and a second time of his own accord (a blara boli koro, "the accuser places him under the boli"; a y'i bla boli koro, "the accused has placed himself under the fetish").

a boli sien (5) is needed, for the fetish must again be called on to be

/See footnote 5 immediately preceding./

a witness. /153/ These oaths entail heavy expenses, for one hen is seldom enough and a goat is very often necessary. I have seen four or five dogs, equal to an expenditure of 20 to 30 francs, sacrificed over a trivial matter.

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782 The three chief sacrifices offered by individuals are the fani-nké (1), the gnénama fani (2), and the sou fani (3). The first is made

1. Fani, "small throat cutting"; ké, "to make."

2. Gnénama, "one who has life," "alive."

3. Sou, "corpse."

to obtain a favor, to place oneself in the good graces of the fetish; the second, to preserve one's life, to escape a death already decreed; and the third is offered to appease a fetish whom one blames for the death of a relative (4) and to entreat it to spare the survivors of the

4. Eighty times out of 100, without exaggeration, death is blamed on a boli fetish.

[74]

778 572 mother who bore him"), and on the phrase sinna dé meaning "a child at the breast," I believe I can give this meaning to the word sinnakoun ("head," "tip of the breast": or again, "because of the breast"): "Between us it is as if we had sucked the same breast; therefore, we are like brothers." And /155/the persons bound by this type of friendship regard themselves as such, exchanging witticisms and light jokes without ever quarreling. Yet the Negroes are very sensitive and hardly ever allow joking. Seing such friends one would take them for kanémé, and the latter are relatives since they are maternal cousins (1).

1. A woman's children and the children of her brothers are kanémé to each other. Sinnakoun and kanémé are not impediments to marriage.

The sinnakoun between families dates from time immemorial; it appears to have no history, or at least I was unable to persuade anyone to tell me what it is. In any case, one can believe that it is a friendship sworn on a boli, or in its presence if you like, since nowadays two heads of families who wish to be united, to be sinnakoun, together redden a powerful fetish.

6. Talking Boli

778 761 These are supposed to bring death to anyone who scorns them. Nevertheless, they are seldom blamed for death, and they bring chiefly evil spells, sorcery, and sickness. They are in the hands of so-called sorcerers, real leeches who go through villages in the dry season, always holding out their hands and begging.

778 791 A talking boli is usually the tail of an animal and the sacrifices are made on this tail. The owner always has his instrument in an unusual skin, often the hide of a small wild animal, and he lets an end protrude. That, I believe, is his insignia, his mark of identification, unless it be the small bell he hangs on the paws of the hide and which he knows so well how to shake in order to notify people of his arrival.

2. No Sacrifice to the Shades of the Dead

764 182 At every death the blood of hens, goats, and dogs flows in streams. I would like to be able to think and say with some Europeans that all these sacrifices are an honor paid to the shades of the deceased and the ancestors, but that is impossible for me. Not the slightest sacrifice is offered to a person's soul on the day of death or the day of burial. The Negroes are logical in their beliefs; the soul does not leave the body until after burial, and a dead person has no right to a sacrifice until he is in Lahara, or the world of spirits. Prayers are undoubtedly said. Objects which belonged to the deceased or were used in paying the final respects to him are destroyed and placed as saraka at the corner of land formed by paths that cross. But nothing in all this would be a sacrifice, bloody or bloodless in Bambara eyes (1).

● [761]

1. Very rarely, a dead person is thought to have caused a Negro's death. If the sorcerer asserts that a deceased individual is the cause of a death, a sacrifice is made to him, but it is made to quiet him because he is a murderer, and not at all because he is dead.

764 782 761 And to whom are they directed, all these hecatombs and streams of blood? I already said, in the chapter where I discussed sickness and death, that a Bambara never dies a natural death. Always he is the victim of poison, of a gnâma or of a djiné, or -- 80 times out of 100 -- a powerful fetish, such as a Komo, Kono, Nama, Nia, or Douga, has caused him to perish. At every death one or another of the following expressions is on all lips: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba act"; -- "keroti kér'a la, the poison of the fetishes was thrown at him"; -- "dounkono dir'a ma, he has been given poison"; -- "Komo, Kono, or Nama, etc., sera a ma, the Komo, Kono, or /216/ Nama

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782 has reached him"; -- "djinéou no do, the djiné are the cause of it";
761 -- "a fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma"; -- "boli y'a fa, a boli killed him."

Thus, all the sacrifices which are made on the occasion of a death are directed to the fetishes which are thought to be murderers, and if a deceased member of the family or of a family of strangers gets a slight trickle of blood, that is because on the word of a sorcerer he is guilty. When it is thought that the deceased was the victim of poured poison (dounkono) or korti (poison of the fetishes), thrown sorcery, there is recourse to the diviners and sorcerers to ascertain what invisible being must be soothed and what sacrifice should be uttered. If a gnâma is involved, a sacrifice to a fetish is often prescribed to ensure its protection, but to the gnâma itself a plain saraka, with or without bloodshed, is offered. These saraka are seldom made to the Supreme Being Alla; they are offered to the lesser djiné genii that run around the village and like to rest in the da-n-koun in among the gnâma.

3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised

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[304] Few honors are rendered at death to the uncircumcised and unexcised; such persons are not really Bambara, for they lack the tribal mark. The head of the village and his council ascertain that the death has occurred and, depending on the order received from the diviners, a sacrifice is offered or a saraka placed. The people of the village come to offer their condolences to the bereaved family, and when the grave has been dug, two or three youths bury the corpse without further ceremony.

The father wears mourning for a whole day, and for at least three days the mother grieves in her hut with a few women friends, her neighbors. A barbaric custom also decrees that if the deceased is an unweaned infant its big toe must be broken, in the presence of its mother, and many fathers do more. They mark it with a knife on the forehead, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the arms; they cut the upper lip or the lobe of an ear. This procedure always makes a deep impression on a mother, especially if she has given birth when

764 white clothes or wrap it in a shroud, and when they have finished preparing it, they lay it in the middle of the dwelling on a coarse mat (called tjékala or sometimes kara) which is covered with a fine mat in which it will be wrapped to be carried to the grave. Many times, too, a heavy stone, used to grind sorghum, is laid on the abdomen of the corpse, doubtless to keep it from swelling. The women then cover themselves with white cloths, bed covers if nothing else is available; then they sit on their tiny stools and mourn and weep.

The eldest in the family, the new gouatigi (head of the family) also has much to do. /Note the assumption throughout that the old person deceased was also a family head. - Ed./ He consults the sorcerers, places saraka or has them placed, sacrifices, and he does not rest until the diviners have indicated to him the guilty one, the fetish who is the assassin. Dressed in white, he then goes to sit in the b'lon or at the door of the b'lon (the entry hut), and the headman and his council as well as neighbors and friends from the village and from neighboring villages come to pay their respects and express their sympathy.

All these people behave correctly; they talk in low tones and avoid laughter, and the monotony of the silence is broken by the cries of the women. As soon as they come in sight of the village, they throw white cloths over their heads and their cries grow ever louder until at last they are in the hut /219/ of the deceased. There they stop crying, dry their tears, and immediately begin to clap their hands, beat a gourd inverted in a conari full of water, and sing of the honors and achievements of the deceased.

[761] Indeed, there is nothing sad about the death of an old man; he has finished to the end the cycle of his existence, and it is in good taste to rejoice. The grandchildren of the deceased are full of joy, for their great-uncles and uncles give them a ba (800 cowrie shells); they are allowed to take a fat hen from the hen house (often even a billy or nanny goat from the grandfather's stable), and they are made [534] to dance to the sound of xylophones, drums, and triangles (kingé). This dance of the grandchildren is held before the first djansa (1),

1. A kind of alms given to the players of instruments and to the children.

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causing her own child to die. A mother who has lost her child may adopt an orphan and give it her breast.

766 crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone
845 with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer: "Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or the south, etc.," (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

782 Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul
764 of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows neverthe-
778 less. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with reddening the family boli; they stain with blood all the boli fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the boli a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

761 Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful
782 boli which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the
764 environs of Ségou the Komo, Nia, Kono, Nama, and Douga are the
778 ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the tafé (1) if it is a woman, are hung

1. Tafé: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
778 bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to

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2. The head tax is 3.50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant," but a tender mother.

pay. /227/

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the Komo, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
[824] kola nuts, roosters, and hens, gnâma-n-kou (Amormum melegueta), and djalakouma (a plant whose name I do not know). The family needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens with golden necks bite the dust. A bara (1) (gourd) full of gnâma-n-

[415 834]

1. This bara (a large pumpkin /courge/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

kou fruit and another full of djalakouma are offered. One portion of these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

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2. The holy water of the Komo is made of roots and leaves of the djalakouma and the fruit of the